

Pearl® Laser Skin Resurfacing

Springfield Ear, Nose, Throat & Facial Plastic Surgery
3555 South Culpepper Circle Springfield, MO 65804

Wrinkles of the face come in three main varieties. Some occur only with muscle contraction and then disappear at rest; these are best treated with Botox® to paralyze the muscles. Deeper creases between the eyebrows and beside the nose and mouth are the second type, and respond best to being softened with a filler, such as Radiesse®, Restylane®, or fat. Lastly, there are mild to medium skin wrinkles that represent a problem of *skin texture* and these require some method of *skin resurfacing* treatment. Pearl® laser resurfacing is a new option of this last type. Please also see our separate informational brochures on the other treatments mentioned here as well.

Options in skin resurfacing

The treatment choice depends on the depth and severity of wrinkles. Mild skin roughness and fine wrinkling (also some pigmentation issues) are improved with microdermabrasion or light chemical peels such as glycolic acid. Moderate wrinkles may be treated with a medium depth chemical peel or, for a more precise response, with Pearl®. Deep wrinkles require more aggressive therapy such as the carbon dioxide laser, but this involves 10-14 days downtime, some prolonged redness, and an increased risk of pigment change.

How does Pearl® work?

With the exception of microdermabrasion, all resurfacing techniques all cause a controlled injury to the skin, seeking to obtain a predictable healing response and generate better, fresher complexion. Pearl® uses a YSGG laser at 2790 nm wavelength that combines benefits of the carbon dioxide and erbium lasers. A portion of the epidermis layer of the skin is removed and the depth controlled by the treatment setting. Collagen growth is enhanced in the deeper dermis layer. Although not as aggressive as certain peels or carbon dioxide laser, this offers much less down time and can even be done as a “weekend laser peel.”

Who can benefit from treatment?

Pearl® is designed for individuals with fair to medium pigmentation and who have mild to moderate wrinkles. Most resurfacing procedures (except for microdermabrasion) should be avoided for individuals with darker complexion such as Mediterranean, Asian, and African – American heritage. There is significant risk of causing bleaching or darkening of the skin in these ethnicities.

How is the treatment performed?

The actual treatment is completed in about 20 minutes, although topical anesthetic is applied in advance for 50 – 60 minutes. Afterward, ointment such as petrolatum (Vaseline®) or Aquaphor® is applied.

How many treatments are necessary?

Since each person has a different amount of wrinkling, treatment is individualized. Some patients may have opportunity for benefit from additional Pearl® resurfacing. Or, subsequent treatment may be focused on a particular area, such as wrinkles around the mouth. A chemical peel may be combined with Pearl® for deeper wrinkles in a particular area.

Care following treatment

- Medication – an antiviral medication is given to reduce the risk of fever blister outbreak. It is given to all patients since about 80% of people have been exposed to the Herpes virus that causes these. Pain medication is usually not necessary though acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Motrin®) can be taken.
- Washing - Gently wash the face 2-3 times daily with a gentle soap such as Dove® or Ivory® after treatment and then apply petroleum jelly (Vaseline®) or Aquaphor® ointment . This is done until peeling and healing are complete.
- Cool Compresses - Cool, damp washcloths may be soothing right after the peel. A mixture of 2 TSP white vinegar in 2 cups of water works well.
- Peeling – begins a couple days after treatment and should be allowed to happen on its own. Resist the natural temptation to “help” by picking or scratching because this can cause scarring.

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- Sun Exposure - Sun exposure can cause increased pigmentation (darkening) after Pearl®. Avoid excess sun exposure and use daily sunscreen (SPF 30+) for 6 months after your procedure. Also, sun exposure is the #1 agent causing aging of skin; avoidance will help preserve a more youthful appearance!
- Makeup – may normally be worn once the skin has fully healed, usually in 4-5 days

Complimentary procedures for Pearl®

- Titan® skin tightening – sagging skin often accompanies texture problems. Titan® is a nonsurgical treatment to tighten collagen in the skin without surgery or downtime.
- LimeLight® - intense pulsed light (IPL) therapy helps reduce tan / blotchy pigmentation issues, redness, and blood vessels.
- Other surgical procedures – may enhance the aesthetic result, depending on a patient's particular needs.

Risks and complications

Although laser facial resurfacing is a very safe treatment, any procedure involves potential risk that should be mentioned and some include:

- Infection – May occur in any procedure affecting the skin. If cold sores / fever blisters develop please notify our office immediately as the dosage of antiviral medication will be increased. Please call if there is any other concern about infection with increased pain or redness.
- Pigmentation issues – increased or lightened pigmentation.
- Scarring - from unfavorable healing
- Injury – to structures near the face and treatment areas
- Need for further treatment – some patients may benefit from additional Pearl® resurfacing.

Further information on this treatment may also be obtained on the internet by visiting www.springfieldent.com or www.cutera.com.